

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 DOE-15
ACDA-12 PM-05 INR-10 NASA-01 SOE-02 SS-15 OES-07
EB-08 NRC-05 SP-02 CEQ-01 TRSE-00 OIC-02 H-01
PA-01 DOEE-00 /116 W
-----007011 091517Z /46

O R 091444Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7662
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 02904

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TSPA, UN, CA, UR
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR POWER SOURCES ON SATELLITES

REF: STATE 144456

1. SUMMARY: CANADA HAS BEEN TRYING TO ARRANGE BILATERAL MEETING WITH U.S.S.R. ON SUBJECT ABOVE, AND IS AWAITING REPLY. GOC HAS PROPOSED FOUR ITEM AGENDA FOR MEETING WITH SOVIETS: A) AGENDA FOR SPACE COUNCIL MEETING ITSELF; B) TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PROPOSED S AND T WORKING GROUP; C) PROGRAM OF WORK FOR LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE, AND D) FOLLOW-UP ITEMS FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY. SOVIETS HAVE BEEN STALLING BILATERAL MEETING, BUT GOC OPTIMISTIC THAT IT WILL OCCUR BEFORE NEXT MEETING OF OSC. CANADA SUPPORTS ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP, BELIEVES THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE COULD DO USEFUL WORK FOCUSING ON NOTIFICATION OF LAUNCHES OF NPS, THAT S&T SUBCOMMITTEE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON SAFETY ISSUES, AND IS NOT PUSHING FOR MORATORIUM. END SUMMARY.

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2. SCICOUNS MET WITH B. DICKSON OF LEGAL OPERATIONS DIVISION OF EXTAFF ON 8 JUNE 1978 (DICKSON HAS RESPONSIBILITY UNDER WANG FOR UN NUCLEAR POWER SOURCE ISSUE) AND CONVEYED SUBSTANCE OF REFTTEL.

3. DICKSON SAID EXTAFF VERY APPRECIATIVE OF RECEIVING INFORMATION ON SOVIET POSITION FROM U.S. AND THAT THIS

WILL BE OF CONSIDERABLE HELP TO THE GOC IN FORTHCOMING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIETS ON ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN WITHIN THE U.N. FRAMEWORK.

4. THE GOC HAS BEEN TRYING TO SET UP A MEETING WITH THE SOVIETS AT THE U.N. IN NEW YORK TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT, BUT HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE "TRADITIONAL STALL" APPROACH: "EITHER THE TIMES PROPOSED FOR THE BILATERAL MEETING WERE TOO EARLY OR TOO LATE; THE SUBJECT WAS SAID TO BE OF MINOR IMPORTANCE COMPARED TO THAT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS; THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE A WAY TO DEAL WITH THE NUCLEAR POWER SYSTEMS MATTER AT THIS TIME, ETC."

5. CANADA HAS NOW PROPOSED TO THE U.S.S.R. THAT THEY HOLD A BILATERAL MEETING EITHER A WEEK BEFORE, OR A DAY BEFORE THE MEETING OF THE U.N. OUTER SPACE COMMITTEE BEGINS. THE GOC SUGGESTED THAT THE MEETING BE HELD AT THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION LEVEL AND THAT THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED INCLUDE: A) THE AGENDA FOR THE OUTER SPACE COMMITTEE ITSELF, WITH THE GOC PUSHING FOR THE NPS AS A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM, B) THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PROPOSED WORKING GROUP OF THE S&T SUBCOMMITTEE, C) A PROGRAM OF WORK FOR THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE, AND D) CONSIDERATION OF WHAT FOLLOW-UP STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN WITH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.
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6. IN RESPONSE TO THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE REFTEL, DICKSON WAS PLEASED TO LEARN THAT THE SOVIETS FAVOR ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP IN THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE (THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE GOC HAD HEARD OF THIS POSITION). HOWEVER, THE GOC BELIEVES THAT THE FACTORS RELATING TO THE SAFETY ASPECTS OF NUCLEAR POWER SYSTEMS IN SPACE SHOULD BE THE PRIMARY SUBJECT FOR WORKING GROUP CONSIDERATION.

7. THE GOC (IN THE OPINION OF DICKSON) BELIEVES THAT THERE IS AN IMPORTANT ROLE FOR THE LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE IN EXAMINING LAUNCH NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND IN REVIEWING EXISTING LEGAL INSTRUMENTS, WHICH CAN GO AHEAD WITHOUT MORE INPUT FROM THE S&T SUBCOMMITTEE.

8. DICKSON MADE THE COMMENT THAT IF THE WORKING GROUP DOES NOT FOCUS ON THE SAFETY ASPECTS OF NPS, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT ITS FUNCTION WILL BE. IN CONSIDERING SAFETY ASPECTS, CANADA CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE IDEA OF ESTABLISHING SAFETY STANDARDS.

9. CANADA HAS NEVER GONE SO FAR AS TO SUPPORT A MORATORIUM, AS PROPOSED BY SWEDEN, AND DOES NOT INTEND TO DO SO UNLESS THE ANSWERS TO THE SAFETY QUESTIONS TURN OUT TO BE UNACCEPTABLE.

10. THE GOC HAD PLANNED TO MEET SEPARATELY WITH SWEDEN AND JAPAN BEFORE MEETING WITH THE SOVIETS, BUT CHANGED ITS MIND AND NOW BELIEVES THAT MEETINGS WITH THESE TWO AFTER A DISCUSSION WITH THE U.S.S.R. WILL BE MORE PRODUCTIVE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 OTTAWA 02904

11. THE GOC WILL KEEP THE U.S. ADVISED OF THE OUTCOME OF THE BILATERAL MEETINGS MENTIONED ABOVE.
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